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ALLEGHENY PORTAGE RAILROAD.

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SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT,

FOR THE

FISCAL YEAR ENDING NOVEMBER 30, 1855.

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REPORT.

To the Board of Canal Commissioners :

GENTLEMEN:—In making this, my third and last annual report to the Board, as Superintendent of Motive Power and Supervisor of Repairs on the Allegheny Portage railroad, I beg permission to say, that I retire from the position which I have held for the last three years, deeply impressed with a sense of gratitude for the favors conferred upon me, and the confidence reposed in me. I have the consolation of being conscious of having discharged my duties as a public officer, influenced by the proper desires; and if, in any instance, I failed, it was not an error of intention.

The Allegheny Portage railroad was opened on the 1st day of March last, for the transaction of the business of transportation for the year 1855. The prospects, at that time, for a fair trade, were flattering; but by an arrangement, 1st July last, between the Pennsylvania railroad company and the several companies of transportation upon the State improvements, the cars of the latter were withdrawn from the Allegheny Portage railroad. This unlooked for withdrawal at once paralyzed the business of the road. In a short time, however, the blight to the heretofore bright prospects of a year of prosperity, was in some measure removed, by the increase of section boat transportation; the augmentation of the coal and lumber trade; and the putting in operation of a "New Way Line" by R. M. Lemon & Co.

From the 1st day of July until the close of the fiscal year, the "Old Line" having ceased to exist, the business of the road flowed from these sources alone. As a matter of course, the tonnage, for the last five months, suffered a very material decrease.

It is to be desired that the Legislature, during the approaching session, may clothe the Board of Canal Commissioners with the power necessary to win back the trade, which is now lost to our improvements, by giving to capital a secure investment in the stock of transporting companies. This can only be done, by abandoning, at once, the agitation of the question of "a sale of the main line," and the adoption of such a tariff of tolls as will enable transporters on the State improvements to compete successfully with rival lines on others.

That portion of the new Portage railroad, avoiding planes Nos. 9 and 10, was opened on the 23d day of April. On the 1st day of May, the repair force upon the entire line was materially decreased. During the month of June, however, it became necessary to increase, for the balance of the year, the number of repair hands upon the new grade, on account of the numerous slides and the giving way of the embankments.

The operations upon the road were conducted during the entire year without any casualty of importance, with one exception. On the 23d day of July an accident occurred on the "new grade" west of Hollidaysburg. The locomotive "Hercules," and tender, ran into a land slide, and were precipitated

down a bank, a distance of thirty feet, entirely destroying the "tender," and causing serious damage to the locomotive. It cost five hundred dollars to repair the engine. The tender was replaced by a new one, at a cost of sixteen hundred and fifty dollars.

There are, at this time, eight first class locomotives belonging to the Portage railroad, viz :

Forsyth,	Philadelphia.
Jupiter,	Pittsburg.
Hercules,	Blair.
Bedford,	Morrison.

Of this number, the Blair and Morrison are new engines, and are running temporarily on the Philadelphia and Columbia railroad. In addition to the eight first class locomotives, which now constitute the entire available power of the road, the new road with its increased grades, being just on the eve of being opened throughout its whole length, there will be required *three* additional engines for the business of 1856. None others than locomotives of the first class will, for the future, be of any service upon the Portage railroad. The heavy grades, which have taken the place of the inclined planes, can only be worked by engines, the weight and power of which rank them with those of the first class.

There are now in use upon the road, thirteen sets of section boat trucks, which, after having undergone the necessary repairs, may be relied upon for the business of 1856. In view of the anticipated increase in the amount of transportation by section boats in 1856, at least four additional sets of trucks should be built during the present winter. These, with the thirteen sets now running, will be sufficient for the transit of all the section boats which may be in service upon the main line.

I would again call the attention of the Board to the necessity of laying a new track with heavy rail, from the basin at Hollidaysburg to the intersection of the new road at Duncansville; also, a new track with heavy rail from the basin at Johnstown to Conemaugh station, on the Pennsylvania railroad. The old tracks on these portions of the road, are nearly worn out. The locomotives running on them have been much damaged, in consequence of the frail condition and weakness of the rail. The Superintendent of the New Portage submitted to the Board an estimate of the cost of this suggested improvement, the amount of which is trifling, compared with the saving of the wear and tear of machinery which would be realized.

The last Legislature made the following appropriations for this road, viz :

For the payment of motive power debts of 1854.....	\$11,135 03
For motive power expenses of 1855.....	173,358 00
Do.....do....after December 1, 1855.....	30,000 00
For repairs of 1855, including amount set apart out of appropriation of 1854, for repairs after December 1st, 1854.....	35,000 00.

The amount appropriated for motive power of 1855, as shown by the accompanying tabular statement No 1, has been found insufficient to meet the whole expenditures in that department for the year. After having disbursed the balance now in my hands, there will exist liabilities amounting to the sum of \$25,110 58, to be provided for by the next Legislature. Included in this sum is a bill of eight hundred dollars, being the amount of what might be considered equitably due Ridgway & Co., of Philadelphia, for oil delivered previous to the fiscal year of 1855. This oil bill I did not include in the reported debt of 1854, for the reason that the oil, when delivered, was found to be of a very inferior quality, and it was my intention to return the whole of it, to the firm from whom I purchased it. Subsequently it was found practicable to use a portion of it, the balance having been returned. I

refer thus particularly to this bill, in order to explain a cause of the deficit in my estimate of motive power indebtedness for 1854.

That the Board may be satisfied that the existing motive power indebtedness for 1855 was unavoidable, it is only necessary to state that my estimate for motive power of 1855, was based upon the expectation that the inclined planes would be avoided, at least by the first day of last September. The members of the Board were even more sanguine than myself, which led them to hope that the new road would be opened by the first day of June. This expectation induced them to curtail my estimates for motive power, some fifty-five thousand dollars. As the new Portage railroad is not opened at the present time, (but will be in a few days,) there can be no surprise that a debt exists at the close of the fiscal year.

In like manner, the appropriation for repairs of 1855 was not sufficiently large to defray all the expenditures of the repair department for the year, as shown by accompanying tabular statement, No. 2. An appropriation of \$7,766 75, will be required to cancel the indebtedness existing at the close of the fiscal year.

Of course no portion of the appropriations for motive power or for repairs, after December 1st, 1855, has been drawn from the Treasury by me. They will be drawn and disbursed by my successor in office.

I have made a careful estimate of the appropriations that will be required for the motive power and repair departments of the Allegheny Portage railroad, for the year 1856. Those estimates are based upon the actual requirements of this line, and I feel well assured, that to diminish the amount, must necessarily result in leaving a debt at the termination of the coming year.

In order to exhibit, at a glance, the amount of the respective appropriations that will be required for the liquidation of existing indebtedness on the road, and for the payment of motive power and repairs of 1856, I annex the accompanying statement, viz :

For motive power debts of 1855.....	\$25,110 58
For repair debts of 1855.....	7,766 75
For motive power of 1856, exclusive of the \$30,000 appropriated for motive power after December 1st, 1855, and including cost of three locomotives.....	137,435 00
For repair expenses of 1856, including the amount that may be set apart by the Board out of the appropriation for repairs, after December 1st, 1855	37,500 00
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	207,812 33
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It is unnecessary that I should refer, in this report, to the old claims prior to December 1st, 1853. Provisions for their payment having been embraced in the unfinished business of the last session of the Legislature, the subject will, no doubt, be again brought to the attention of that body at the approaching session.

The great object so long and so anxiously wished for, the opening of the new road to avoid the inclined planes, has at length been realized. Truly, this is a consummation upon which the friends of the State improvements may look with much satisfaction. Taking into consideration the almost insurmountable difficulties to be overcome, the great cost of accomplishing the undertaking, the difficulty of reconciling public opinion to so large an expenditure, at a time when the indebtedness of the Commonwealth had reached its present amount, it may be now considered a matter of surprise that the end was ever reached. But the difficulties have been surmounted, and we may look forward with certainty, to the realization of all the promised advantages of this important improvement.

The time required to transport tonnage across the mountains, from one terminus of the canal to the other, will hereafter be reduced at least one-half. The expenses for motive power and for keeping up the line (after the road bed shall have become properly settled,) will be materially curtailed.

With these prospects in anticipation, it is not to be doubted, that the *future* of the Allegheny Portage railroad will contrast most favorably with the past.

Respectfully yours,

JOHN ROSS.

SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE,
Hollidaysburg, Dec. 1, 1855. }

TABULAR STATEMENTS.

Statement No. 1, exhibits the amount of expenditures for motive power of 1855, the amount of debts still due, and an estimate for 1856.

Statement No. 2, exhibits the amount of expenditures for repairs of 1855, the amount of debts still due, and an estimate for 1856.

Statement No. 3, exhibits the amounts drawn and disbursed by the Superintendent of Motive Power and Supervisor of Repairs on the Allegheny Portage railroad for the fiscal year 1855.

STATEMENT, No. 1.

The following statement exhibits the Expenditures for Motive Power for the fiscal year ending November 30, 1855, the amount of debts still due, and an estimate for 1856:

	Am't paid.	Am't due.	Total.	Estimate for 1856.
Labor at Inclined planes.....	\$10,020 37	\$933 50	10,953 87	\$500 00
Do....Hollidaysb'g boat slip	576 50	71 50	648 00	825 00
Do....Johnstown.....do..	1,182 60	147 25	1,329 85	1,200 00
Do....Hollidaysburg depot..	7,130 12	738 98	7,869 10	8,800 00
Do....Johnstown.....do..	6,182 99	433 42	6,616 41	8,800 00
Do....Summit shops.....	1,037 93	117 00	1,154 93	
Do....Rigger's Loft.....	776 80	.....	776 80	
Do..of wood & m. p. carmen	1,902 80	729 46	2,632 26	2,500 00
Do....truck-men and switch- tenders	4,624 48	637 00	5,261 48	4,500 00
Do....locomotive engineers and firemen.....	10,451 61	1,187 50	11,639 11	13,800 00
Do....despatchers and wood inspector.....	2,242 00	240 00	2,482 00	2,190 00
Do....Sup't, Assist's & Clerk	3,151 12	.....	3,151 12	2,920 00
Do....miss. employees.....	639 96	54 00	693 96	1,750 00
* Cost of cord wood.....	58,227 09		58,227 09	40,000 00
Do....coal.....	11,885 35	1,306 62	13,191 97	12,000 00
Do....oil and tallow.....	8,991 46	3,516 00	12,507 46	6,000 00
Do....iron, steel & smithing	6,397 24	509 28	6,906 52	7,500 00
Do....mo. power castings..	3,972 23	706 61	4,678 84	
Do....postage & stationery,	137 44	.....	137 44	200 00
Do....miscellaneous items,	4,440 67	733 58	5,174 25	4,000 00
Do....material and lumber,	10,469 86	2,178 16	12,648 02	5,000 00
Do....ropes & packing yarn	2,104 29	.....	2,104 29	
Do....locomo. machinery..	4,175 70	59 25	4,234 95	1,800 00
Do....sawing and splitting wood.....	6,405 89	748 75	7,154 64	8,800 00
Do....horse power.....	12,250 25	1,540 00	13,790 25	3,600 00
Do....locomotive engines..	20,750 00	10,250 00	31,000 00	30,750 00
Do....repairing stationary engines.....	1,373 29	130 68	1,503 97	
	201,500 04	26,968 54	228,468 58	167,435 00
Deduct m. p. appropriation after Dec. 1, '55	.....	.....	.....	30,000 00
Amount required for motive power of 1856	.....	.....	.....	137,435 00
Deduct am't of appropriations as follows:				
For motive power of 1855..	\$173,358 00			
For m. p. after Dec. 1, 1854..	30,000 00			
		.....	203,358 00	
Deduct balance in hands of Superintendent		1,857 96		
		25,110 58	25,110 58	
Balance required to pay motive power debts of 1855.....				25,110 58
Total am't required to pay m. p. expenses of 1856 and debts of 1855				162,545 58

* There is at the close of the fiscal year wood on hand amounting to the sum of \$13,000, all of which is included in the expenditures for wood for 1855.

STATEMENT, No. 2.

The following statement exhibits the Expenditures for Repairs for the fiscal year ending November 30, 1855, the amount yet due, and an estimate for 1856:

ITEMS.	Am't paid.	Am't due.	Total.	Estimate for 1856.
Wages of carpenters, foremen and laborers.....	\$17,884 43	\$2,570 70	\$20,455 13	\$25,000 00
Cost of string timber, sills, plank, ties and lumber....	11,869 73	2,975 42	14,845 15	8,500 00
Cost of repair castings.....	1,581 43	.....	1,581 43	1,000 00
Cost of iron, steel, blacksmithing, &c.....	3,671 04	2,214 00	5,585 04	3,000 00
	35,006 63	7,760 12	42,766 75	37,500 00
Add amount due Superintendent.....		6 63		
		7,766 75		
Deduct amount of appropriation for repairs of 1855,			35,000 00	
Excess of expenditures over appropriations.....				7,766 75
Total amount required to pay repair expenses of 1856, and debts of 1855.....				45,266 75

NOTE.—Whatever amount of the appropriation for repairs after December 1, 1856, may be set apart for the Allegheny Portage railroad, to be deducted from the amount of the foregoing estimate.

STATEMENT, No. 3,

Exhibits the amount drawn and disbursed by the Superintendent of Motive Power, and Supervisor of Repairs, on the Allegheny Portage railroad, in the fiscal year of 1855.

	Am't drawn.	Am't disbursed.
Motive power of 1855.....	\$203,358 00	\$201,500 04
Repairs of 1855.....	35,000 00	35,006 63
	238,358 00	236,506 67
Balance in the hands of Superintendent		\$1,851 33